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Committee for Programme and Coordination
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Agenda item 8
Adoption of the report of the Committee on its forty-eighth session

Draft report

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Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation
(Item 3 (c))

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of political affairs: field special political missions led by the Department of Political Affairs but supported by the Department of Field Support

1. At its 3rd meeting, on 10 June 2008, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the in-depth evaluation of political affairs: field special political missions led by the Department of Political Affairs but supported by the Department of Field Support (E/AC.51/2008/2).

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the report and representatives of OIOS and the Department of Political Affairs responded to questions raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

3. Delegations expressed their appreciation for the report of OIOS and several commended its quality. Delegations also expressed their general agreement with the conclusions contained in the report and a number of delegations expressed their support for the recommendations.

4. Delegations agreed that special political missions had an important role to play in the peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts of the United Nations. Some noted with concern the observations made by OIOS that the role of special political missions, their part in the peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts of the

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United Nations, and their partnerships with other parts of the United Nations system were ill-defined. Delegations also expressed concern that there was insufficient coordination between special political missions and other United Nations actors.

5. Delegations noted the OIOS finding that it was not easy to gauge whether special political missions were implementing their mandates effectively. That difficulty was compounded by the lack of systematic performance information and a lack of evaluation of the impact of the work of special political missions in prior reporting periods. Delegations agreed that there needed to be more scrutiny of the performance of special political missions, the relevance of their activities and of whether they were producing the desired results.

6. Some delegations noted the need for improved strategic planning and budgeting for special political missions and a question was raised regarding the viability of missions producing exit strategies as part of their strategic planning and budgeting. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services noted that there must be more attention paid to developing mission exit strategies that helped define and plan for the eventual cessation of the mission. A few delegations also noted with concern that recruitment processes were not able to provide staff with the skills appropriate to the special political missions within the required time frame as well as the low representation of women staff within missions and that many staff surveyed believed the amount of training they received was not sufficient.

7. Questions were raised about the efforts of the Department of Political Affairs in addressing the findings contained in the report and about what initiatives were under way within the Department to implement the recommendations. The representative of the Department responded that some steps had already been taken to implement the recommendations and that implementation of the Secretary-General's proposals for the strengthening of the Department would also address some of the findings contained within the report.

Conclusions and recommendations

8. **The Committee recommended to the General Assembly to endorse recommendations 1 to 4 contained in the report (E/AC.51/2008/2), subject to the provisions below.**

9. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly amend recommendation 1 (para. 55) as follows: after the words "should develop", insert "within its mandate".**

10. **In that regard, the Committee noted in particular the need to improve the overall management of the special political missions as well as (a) the intended overall role and goals of the mission, (b) the expected activities of the mission and how those activities would contribute to the achievement of the mission mandate, (c) the expected time required to achieve the mandate and (d) indicators or criteria that might be used in measuring mission progress and in determining whether the mission could be said to have accomplished its mandate.**

11. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure that special political missions and other local actors strengthen their cooperation and coordination in order to achieve the expected outcomes and to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the work of the United Nations.**